

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Withdrawn) A skin aging-preventing or improving agent which comprises a substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase.

2. (Withdrawn) A skin aging-preventing or improving agent which comprises a substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase.

3. (Withdrawn) The skin aging-preventing or improving agent according to claim 1, wherein the substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is a plant selected from the group consisting of *Althaeaofficinalis*, *Curcuma longa*, *Actinidia chinensis*, *Gentiana lutea*, *Crataeguscuneata*, *Rehmannia glutinosa*, *Syzygium aromaticum*, *Calendula officinalis*, *Rose canina*, *Petroselinium sativum*, *Hamamelisvirginiana*, *Asiasarum sieboldii*, *Thymus serpyllum*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Sophora flavescens*, *Cnidium officinale*, *Zizyphus jujuba*, *Citrus unshiu*, *Angelica acutiloba*, *Fucusvesiculosus*, *Tilia platyllos*, *Humulus lupulus*, *Citruslimon*, *Cassia obatusifolia*, *Magnolia obovata*, *Evodia rutaecarpa*, *Schisandrachinensis*, *Cornus officinalis*, *Atractylodes japonica*, *Digeneasimplex*, and mixtures thereof; or an extract thereof.

4. (Currently Amended) A method for treating aging of the skin which has wrinkles, is sagging, and/or has a loss of the skin elasticity, comprising:

contacting skin of a subject in need of treatment with a skin treating agent, thereby increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase in the skin and, thus treating the aging skin of the subject;

wherein the subject has wrinkles, sagging of the skin, and/or a loss of the skin elasticity,

wherein said treating agent comprises a substance capable of increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase;

wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is ~~a plant, a part of a plant,~~ an aqueous ethanol extract of a plant, ~~an extract of or a part of a plant,~~ or a combination thereof, and said plant is *Digeneasimplex*;

~~wherein, if said substance is a plant, an amount of said plant as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent; and~~

~~wherein, if said substance is an extract of said plant,~~ an amount of said extract of said plant or the part of the plant as reduced to solid content is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent.

5. (Withdrawn) A method for screening skin wrinkling- and sagging-improving agents, which method comprises incubating skin fibroblasts with a test substance, and measuring the amount of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase expressed in the fibroblasts.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said agent is applied to said skin in an amount of from 0.01 to 10 mg/cm².

7. (Canceled)

8. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance comprises a part of said plant.

9. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is the plant part described in Japanese Pharmacopoeia for *Digeneasimplex*.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein said agent is in the form of a cream, an ointment, a gel, a lotion, a solution, a pack, or a foundation.

11. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is a plant.

12. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is [[an]] the aqueous ethanol extract of [[a]] the plant.

13. (Withdrawn) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is said part of said plant.

14. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 4, wherein said substance is [[an]] the aqueous ethanol extract of [[a]] the part of [[a]] the plant.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for treating aging of the skin which has wrinkles, is sagging, and/or has a loss of the skin elasticity, comprising:

contacting skin of a subject in need of a treatment with an skin treating agent, thereby increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase in the skin and, thus treating the aging skin of the subject;

wherein the subject has wrinkles, sagging of the skin, and/or a loss of the skin elasticity,

wherein said agent comprises of a substance capable of increasing an expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase;

wherein said substance capable of enhancing the expression level of Rho kinase or myosin light-chain kinase is an aqueous ethanol extract of a part of a plant, and said plant is *Digeneasimplex*, and the part of the plant is described in Japanese Pharmacopoeia for *Digeneasimplex*;

wherein an amount of said extract of $[[a]]$ the plant part as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001 to 5 wt.% based on the total amount of said agent.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein said agent is applied to said skin in an amount of from 0.01 to 10 mg/cm².

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein said agent is in the form of a cream, an ointment, a gel, a lotion, a solution, a pack, or a foundation.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the subject has wrinkles and/or sagging of the skin.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein the agent increases force generated by skin non-muscular cells.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19, wherein the skin non-muscular cells are skin fibroblasts.

21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the subject has wrinkles and/or sagging of the skin.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein the agent increases force generated by skin non-muscular cells.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 22, wherein the skin non-muscular cells are skin fibroblasts.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein an amount of said extract as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001% wt. to 0.01% based on the total amount of said agent.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein an amount of said extract as reduced to dry weight is 0.00001% wt. to 0.002% based on the total amount of said agent.